DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 042 253 EA 003 008

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TITLE Superintendents' Mobility Constructs and Succession Patterns.
PUB DATE Feb 70
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 2-6, 1970)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.95
DESCRIPTORS Content Analysis, Motivation, *Occupational Mobility, Organization, *Public Schools, *Role Perception, *School Superintendents, Social Change, *Success Factors, Technological Advancement

ABSTRACT

The way superintendents perceive their mobility and the succession of routes they use in attaining their positions were compared. A stratified random sample was drawn from the total population of public school superintendents in Illinois based on an extension of the insider-outsider dichotomy. It was found that outsiders tended to use more general constructs of mobility, while insiders were more particularistic in construct formation. Likewise, while outsiders were less specific than insiders in discriminating among categories of intrinsic motivations toward mobility -- personal, family, or value-oriented -- outsiders were less specific in discriminating between two kinds of extrinsic mobility inducements -- materialistic and prestigious. (Author)

ED0 42253

SUPERINTENDENTS' MOBILITY CONSTRUCTS AND SUCCESSION PATTERNS

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February 1970

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EA 003 008

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The Superintendent and Succession

Contemporary man exists within organizations and contemporary life is dominated by those organizations. Although some individuals are analogous to cogs in the machinations of bureaucracy, others utilize vast and complex organizations to accomplish large-scale tasks. In this milieu, man is affected by and in turn affects the organization system of which he is a part.

These influences can be demonstrated in the systems of public education. Here a wide range of organization effects and individual or role influences are noted. A citizen may occasionally feel incapable of affecting the organization charged with the task of educating the populace, yet the incumbent of the position of superintendent of schools, more directly than any other person influences the shape of public education.

The role of the superintendent has increased as has the number of incumbents. The superintendent's problems are more complex than at any time in history. Greater numbers and varieties of students are enrolled. Technological advances have brought about a knowledge explosion. Migration from rural areas to urban centers and from central cities to suburban fringes with demands for equal educational opportunity have placed additional pressures on the schools and on their superintendents. The school's role in social change and the impact of social

change on the schools are so intertwined and basic that superintendents are involved in ever widening spheres of policy development.

A superintendent also exerts an influence on an education organization as a result of succession to the position of chief executive. The complex series of events antecedent to and as a consequence of succession influence greatly the successor's future actions. Maintenance and direction of the organization depends upon the appropriate choice of the successor. Satisfaction or psychic maintenance for the individual depends upon astute selection among roles and positions offered. Inter-dependency of these decisions creates a situation that can occasionally reach a point of trauma.

Those problems associated with the succession of the chief administrator early created an interest in the study of superintendent mobility. The data sets produced as a result of this interest can be divided into three basic groups: 1) studies of the median tenure of school superintendents, 2) studies of the median number of superintendents per district over a given period of time, and 3) studies of the median number of superintendencies held over a given period of time by a sample of incumbents.

Each of the three forms of reporting the incidences of superintendent mobility indicate that occasions when a superintendent leaves a school organization occur frequently. The vacancies formed by these incumbents leaving and the succession of other individuals to the position

of superintendent are assumed to influence the school system. The literature supports such an assumption both in respect to other organizations and within educational systems.

Much of the succession literature describes behavioral differences using a role construct dichotomy. Several researchers have utilized a polarity among the characteristics of role incumbents in regard to their attitudes toward mobility. Marvick discussed 'institutionalists' and 'specialists' in a federal agency (Marvick, 1954); Gouldner looked at differences between 'locals' and 'cosmopolitans' on a college faculty (Gouldner, 1957); Kriesberg used an itinerant' vs. 'homeguard' dichotomy and Carlson investigated 'place-bound' or 'insiders' and 'career-bound' or 'outsiders' as superintendents of schools (Kriesberg, 1962; Carlson, 1962). These findings taken together with the other evidence presented seem to make it clear that succession patterns of school superintendents have considerable power as a predictor of differences in administrative performance. Such succession patterns are however the consequences of antecedent behaviors. An understanding of the predictive power of succession patterns lies within an understanding of the antecedents to the decision to accept another superintendency or to remain.

The Antecedents of the Mobility Decision

A few researchers have attempted to define or describe the

antecedents leading to executive succession. However, some speculations have been advanced relative to events leading to a superintendent leaving or remaining in a district. Bradshaw, in a rather exhaustive search of the literature, identified these antecedents which result in mobility behavior: superintendent-board conflict, economic conditions and community pressures (Bradshaw, 1968). Antecedents of a nature which precludes mobility behavior include: conflict avoidance, 'good'staff relationships and adequate planning by the superintendent (Chase and Sweitzer, 1953; James, 1955; Sharp, 1959).

Assuming that human behavior is at least partly explained by the individual's perception of his role, then aspects of the perceived role include antecedents of the decision to move or to remain. Those antecedents postulated in the previous paragraph reveal role perception conflict or congruency as the superintendent views his role in relation to significant others. Further, if the role prescriptions of superintendents classed as outsiders bring about differences in behavior as compared to insiders, it becomes important to understand those aspects of the role considered salient by the two classes of superintendents. This study then is directed at an understanding of the specific aspects of the superintendent's role considered salient by the incumbent with reference to mobility decisions. Also sought is

an understanding of the differences in saliency of specific aspects as reported by insiders and outsiders.

The Research Methodology

A 1967 report deals with methodological considerations which are appropriate to this research (Miller, 1967). In attempting to explain and classify the viewpoints of elementary teachers regarding the facilitation of learning, Miller developed a unique approach to the problem of differentiating, along qualitative dimensions, the substance and structure of a population's viewpoints. The Miller team established a paradigm for studying the substance and structures of teachers' views. This paradigm was followed in this study of the substance and structure of superintendents' views with regard to mobility.

Based on the postulate that individual human behavior is directed by the individual's perceptions, it is proposed that understanding superintendents' behavioral differences requires a knowledge of their views and perceptions. To record the substance of superintendents' views, a content analysis technique was used for extracting content from the tape recorded responses to a focused interview schedule. This analysis of the expressions of superintendents produced a standardized form of response and allowed for efficient coding of content. The structure within these viewpoints was manifested by a second sample of superintendents through the grouping of

a standardized set of content units. By grouping several content units, the subject was assumed to have detected meaningful similarities in content units. Similarly by separating specific content units it was assumed that the subject had detected meaningful substantive differences among the units.

The development of analytic techniques for comparing the sorting arrangements of several subjects is known as Latent Partition Analysis (Wiley, 1967). The latent partition model assumes a single latent categorization of the content units exists which is common to the categorizations of all the sorters. That is, a single categorization is assumed to be sufficient to explain how each of the sorters performed the sorting task. Each of the sorters were assumed to have operated according to a specific probability process to derive his manifest categories from the latent categories. The latent partition model specifies certain structural arrangements of the latent categorization and of the probability processes. The latent partition model is a scientific, statistical model but not necessarily is a total nor accurate explication of the sorting process. Rather, it was designed according to substantive hypotheses about the sorting processes involved.

All Illinois public school superintendents whose districts enrolled more than 500 students in 1967-68 served as the population from which both stratified random samples were drawn. Content analysis of tape-recorded interviews with a sample of 28 superintendents

yielded 347 content units. A random sampling procedure designed to maintain the content validity was used to reduce the number to a more manageable set of 75 content units. This set of content units was then duplicated for use in the Free-sort experiment.

The second random sample drown from the above population produced 84 superintendents who participated in the Free-sort of content units. The LPA computations were applied to the 84 sorters' categorizations of the 75 elected content units. Fourteen latent categories were yielded with a range of from one to eleven content units per category as indicated in Table I. This Table shows the item composition of the latent categories along with an indication of the primary and secondary loadings. Column (1) simply identifies the latent category while column (2) indicates the number of content units assigned to this category. Columns (3), (4) and (5) give a breakdown according to magnitude of the primary loadings which were used in assigning units to latent categories. Fifty-two percent of the loadings have magnitudes greater than 90 and only one category contained no units with a loading of 90 or more. As will be seen, the strongest loadings are most helpful in understanding a category.

The presence of units which have secondary loadings on two or more latent categories would indicate a lack of consistency in sorting by the total group. Such content units would be considered ambiguous units in that more than one of the latent categories may

be used by a sorter in fitting his construct of that latent unit into a construct system. The incidence of such secondary loadings is shown in columns (6) and (7).

Table I
SUMMARY OF THE ITEM LOADINGS AND COMPOSITION OF LATENT CATEGORIES

Latent Category	Number of Units Assigned	Magnitude of Primary Loadings			Secondary Loadings	
		Strong	Moderate	Weak	By other Units on this Category	By these units on other Categories
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1	11	5	6	0	1	2
2	5	2	1	2	1	1
3	6	6	0	0	1	1
4	5	3	2	0	0	2
5	4	2	1	1	1	0
6	8	3	5	0	2	4
7	2	2	0	0	1	0
8	6	3	3	0	3	4
9	4	2	1	1	2	3
10	4	2	0	2	1	3
11	5	4	0	1	3	1
12	5	2	3	0	8	2
13	7	3	1	3	3	7
14	3	0	2	1	3	3
TOTALS	75	39	25	11	30	30
Means	5.36	2.79	1.79	0.79	2.14	2.14

Because superintendents had been asked to title each of the categories they constructed, analysis of these manifest titles made it easier to title the latent categories. Thus the titles are presented

here in lieu of the listing of the actual content units considered elements of each latent category:

1. Family Education
2. Professional Satisfaction
3. Financial Bases
4. Board Relationships
5. Salary
6. Community Composition
7. Personal Relationships
8. Education Program
9. Personal Expectations
10. Power Challenges
11. Personal Challenge
12. Location
13. Climate
14. Mobility Incentives

If, as in this case, it is suspected that sub-samples of sorters will sort on the basis of a different latent partition, then an additional analysis may be appropriate. According to the latent partition model, if P_i represents the latent category matrix for the ith subsample, then P (the latent category matrix for the total sample) is a sufficient latent partition for explaining each of the sorts of the subsamples as well as a necessary latent partition for explaining the total sorting operation.

The resultant output revealed a tendency for outsiders to create more general categorizations. Since the second-order analysis used here demonstrates the probable unions of categories by subsamples, fewer unions would indicate less sharp discrimination into categories. A corollary to that finding is that the greater number of categories

(placed in the same union by the strength of the loading in the confusion matrix) indicates a greater probability of confusion or lesser degree of discrimination in sorting content units.

More specifically, examining the kinds of categories that tend to be combined produces a better understanding of the differences in sorting behavior between Insiders and Outsiders. Table II at the end of this report demonstrates some of these differences. First, it is easy to see that four clusters or unions of categories were found by LPA analysis of Outsider's sorting data while five were revealed from the Insider's sorts. Both groups tended to use similar constructs for the Family Education and Location categories. Another union of categories is perhaps most critically defined by the differing categories included. Both Insiders and Outsiders found similarities among categories of Financial Bases and Community Composition, but interestingly Insiders tended to add Salary considerations whereas Outsiders added Education Program considerations. This might be interpreted as the Insiders creating a union of categories related basically to financial characteristics of districts while Outsiders use two of the same categories and add Education Program to interpret the supra-category as school district characteristics.

Another difference noted by this researcher is the union of the Professional Satisfaction, Personal Expectations and Personal Challenge categories by the Outsiders. To the Outsider, all of the content units

in these categories may have seemed to deal with the personal satisfactions one finds in his job. However, the Insiders used only the first two of these categories in this union and placed the Personal Challenge items with the larger group of categories which may seem mainly to be involved with critical relationships for the superintendent. In this regard, the Outsiders confuse with that larger group a union of the categories of Personal Relationships and Mobility Incentives while Insiders found them to be composed of more discrete constructs.

The Extension of the Insider-Outsider Classification

At the time that samples were drawn, data from the intended population indicated that about 9% of the population seemed to be improperly classified. That is, a number of superintendents were found to have followed an inside route to their present position, yet had held one or more superintendencies in the past and had indeed moved into the present system as an outsider. On the basis of this information, it seemed necessary to account for this factor in drawing samples and in analyzing the results by sub-sample groupings.

The resultant extension of the insider-outsider classification utilized experience or non-experience as a superintendent as an added classificatory dimension. The sorters in this research were classified accordingly with the results shown below:

1. Insiders with a prior superintendency - Mobile Insiders

2. Insiders with no prior superintendency - Insiders

3. Outsiders with a prior superintendency - Outsiders

4. Outsiders with no prior superintendency - Novice Outsiders

The second-order analysis was then carried out using these two groupings. Interestingly, the Experienced Outsiders developed clusters of categories identical to those of their macro-group, the Outsiders. Table III at the end of this report illustrates the similarities and differences among the four subsamples. Notably, only one union of categories is constant over all four sub-samples. Family Education and Location considerations seem to be identified as logically related items by all four groups.

This was not the case for other categories however. Salary, for example, seems to be confused with different basic clusters by most of the subsamples. Stabile Insiders find Salary related to the Financial Base while Experienced Outsiders relate Salary to that larger constellation of content units which was involved in critical relationships to the superintendent. Both the Mobile Insiders and Novice Outsiders placed Salary considerations along with a cluster of personal satisfaction items.

In fact, there is some justification for the observation that the most critical differences exist mainly between the Stabile Insider and the Experienced Outsider. Put another way, if one scans Table III from one side to the other, he notices the tendency for the Mobile

Insiders and/or the Novice Outsiders to tend to show less change compared to clusters on either side than exists between the right and left extremes.

Table II

UNIONS OF LATENT CATEGORIES INDICATED BY THE
LPA OF CONFUSION MATRICES FOR INSIDERS
COMPARED TO OUTSIDERS

Insiders	Outsiders
Family Education Location	Family Education Location
Financial Bases Community Composition SALARY	Financial Bases Community Composition EDUCATION PROGRAM
Professional Satisfaction Personal Expectations	Professional Satisfaction Personal Expectations PERSONAL CHALLENGE
Board Relationships Power Challenges Climate PERSONAL CHALLENGE EDUCATION PROGRAM	Board Relationships Power Challenges Climate SALARY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS MOBILITY INCENTIVES
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS MOBILITY INCENTIVES	

Table III

UNIONS OF LATENT CATEGORIES INDICATED BY THE LPA OF CONFUSION MATRICES FOR FOUR SUBSAMPLES

Stabile Insiders	Mobile Insiders	Novice Outsiders	Experienced Outsiders
Family Education Location	Family Education Location	Family Education Location	Family Education Location
Professional Satisfaction Personal Expectations	Professional Satisfaction Personal Expectations SALARY	Professional Satisfaction Personal Expectations SALARY PERSONAL CHALLENGE	Professional Satisfaction Personal Expectations PERSONAL CHALLENGE
Financial Bases SALARY	Financial Bases Community Composition	Financial Bases Community Composition	Financial Bases Community Composition EDUCATION PROGRAM
Mobility Incentives Personal Relationships Climate	Mobility Incentives Personal Relationships	Mobility Incentives Personal Relationships Climate	Mobility Incentives Personal Relationships Climate SALARY POWER CHALLENGES BOARD RELATIONSHIPS
Education Program Board Relationships Power Challenges COMMUNITY COMPOSITION PERSONAL CHALLENGE	Education Program Board Relationships Power Challenges CLIMATE PERSONAL CHALLENGE	Education Program Board Relationships Power Challenges	

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